

**Embargoed for Release:**

Saturday, May 4, 2002

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(Spanish Language Interviews)

## **Utah Hispanic Survey Identifies Health Concerns**

**(Salt Lake City, UT)** - A Utah Department of Health (UDOH) survey of more than 900 Hispanic adults in Utah reveals striking differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanics for certain health conditions, risk behaviors, health care access and other major health-related issues.

The report, *2001 Utah Hispanic Health Survey Report*, found that many Utah Hispanics face challenges in obtaining adequate health care. Only 56 percent of Utah Hispanic adults have health insurance, compared to 90.4 percent of the total Utah adult population. Lack of insurance is an important barrier to obtaining adequate health services, especially services related to preventive care. This statistic may soon change with the introduction of UDOH's Primary Care Network where 25,000 Utahns will be able to receive basic health insurance coverage upon qualification.

Survey findings show that 61 percent of Hispanic adults are overweight or obese. In contrast, 52 percent of the overall Utah adult population is overweight or obese. Obesity is at the forefront of public health concerns. It is associated with a number of chronic health conditions, such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

Utah Hispanic adults have higher rates of diabetes across every age category. The difference is particularly high among adults 65 or older. Nearly one of five (19 percent) Hispanic adults have been diagnosed with diabetes, compared to about 12 percent of non-Hispanic adults 65 or older.

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Nationally, Hispanics are slightly less likely to report that they smoke than non-Hispanics. In Utah, the reverse is true. Nearly one of five (19 percent) Utah Hispanic adults smoke, compared to 13 percent of non-Hispanic adults. Men account for the difference in smoking rates. One of four (25.7 percent) Utah Hispanic adult males report being current smokers compared to 14.4 percent of non-Hispanic adult males.

Utah Hispanic adults report lower rates of asthma and arthritis but this may be due to the youthfulness of this population. Over half (58.5 percent) of Hispanic adults in Utah are between the ages of 18 and 34.

The UDOH conducted the *2001 Utah Hispanic Health Survey* to better understand health barriers and disease risk faced by Hispanics statewide. The survey data will help health officials plan, implement and evaluate interventions to improve Hispanic health care and reduce health disparities. “We are committed to addressing the health needs for all people in the state, not just those of the majority population,” said LaDene Larsen, Director of UDOH’s Bureau of Health Promotion.

Hispanics are the largest minority group in Utah, representing nine percent of the state population. More than 200,000 Hispanics live in Utah, up from 85,000 in 1990. The greatest percentage increases were seen in Summit and Washington Counties. The diversity within the Hispanic population makes addressing health care needs particularly challenging. The survey indicates that more than half of Hispanics now living in Utah were born in Mexico, and about one-third were born in the U.S. Similarly, more than half (56 percent) of respondents reported that Spanish was the language most often spoken in the home while less than one-third (32 percent) stated that English was the primary language spoken in the home. Another 12 percent reported that Spanish and English were spoken about equally in the home.

For more information or to request copies of the *Utah Hispanic Survey Highlights* summary brochure, call the Utah Department of Health Resource Line, 1-888-222-2542. The complete *2001 Utah Hispanic Health Report* will be available online in June 2002.

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